DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 296 471 EA 020 159

AUTHOR Purkey, William W.; Novak, John M.
TITLE Education: By Invitation Only. Fastback No. 268.
INSTITUTION Phi Delta Kappa Educational Foundation, Bloomington, Ind.
REPORT NO ISBN-0-87367-268-2
PUB DATE 88
NOTE 35p.; Sponsored by the Clearwater-St. Petersburg Florida Chapter of Phi Delta Kappa.
AVAILABLE FROM Publications, PDK Foundation, 8th Street and Union Avenue, Box 789, Bloomington, IN 47402 ($.90 prepaid; quantity discounts).
PUB TYPE Viewpoints (120)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Affective Objectives; Educational Environment; Elementary Secondary Education; Foundations of Education; Holistic Approach; Humanism; *Humanistic Education; Humanization; Human Relations; Organizational Climate; *Progressive Education; Psychoeducational Methods; *Self Actualization; *Values
IDENTIFIERS *Invitational Education

ABSTRACT

"Invitational Education" is a metaphor for an emerging model of the educative process consisting of four value-based assumptions about the nature of people and their potential: (1) people are able, valuable, and responsible and should be treated accordingly; (2) education should be a collaborative, cooperative activity; (3) people possess untapped potential in all areas of human endeavor; and (4) human potential can best be realized by places, policies, and processes that are specifically designed to invite development, and by people who are intentionally inviting with themselves and others, personally and professionally. This "fastback" presents a conceptual model for invitational education and suggests some practical strategies for making schools the most inviting place in town--intellectually, psychologically, and physically. Part 1 describes the assumptions, elements, and theoretical foundations of invitational education. Part 2 provides tips on translating theory into practice through transformation of the places, people, policies, and programs of a school to ensure that each school day is an invitation to learning. Part 3 provides tips for "Increasing Your Invitational Quotient," both personally and professionally. (TE)

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Education: By Invitation Only

William W. Purkey, John M. Novak

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Education:
By Invitation Only

by
William Watson Purkey
and
John M. Novak

Library of Congress Catalog Card Number 88-60074
ISBN 0-87367-268-2
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Bloomington, Indiana

This fastback is sponsored by the Clearwater-St. Petersburg Florida Chapter of Phi Delta Kappa, which made a generous contribution toward publication costs.

The chapter sponsors this fastback in honor of Dr. Scott N. Rose, superintendent of the Pinellas County Schools, charter member and past president of the chapter, service key recipient, and an outstanding supporter of the chapter.

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Imagine a School

All education springs from some image of the future.
– Alvin Toffler
Learning for Tomorrow (1974)

Imagine a school where students, teachers, administrators, support staff, parents, and community members work together so that everyone involved in the educative process develops their relatively untapped potential. What would such an inviting school be like?

Picture yourself and your family moving into a strange town. Your big question is: "What are the schools like?" You soon find out. Even before your move you obtain a copy of the town's paper and notice it contains several articles regarding the local schools. The high school choral group is planning a tour of Europe; a student wins a science prize; two teachers are just back from an archeological dig sponsored by the state university; a counselor has published a book of poetry. There is also a special column titled, "About Our Schools," which contains a list of upcoming events and activities. You immediately get the feeling that there is energy, pride, and purpose in the schools of this community.

When you and your family arrive in your new town, you spend considerable time with a realtor who is a real booster for the schools. She tells you she recently attended a breakfast reception for the town's

realtors hosted by the high school principal. She states how impressed she was with the guided tour of the school facilities and the statement of educational purpose presented by a group of teachers. She describes how pleased she was with the overall professionalism of the school personnel.

As you find your way around the town, you notice that the local bank has student work on display, as do several stores and public buildings. That evening there is a special program on the local television station dealing with the recent academic successes of the local schools.

When the moving van is unloaded, you call the school to enroll your children. The school phone is answered promptly and courteously; the information you need is provided quickly and efficiently. The person on the phone says how pleased the school will be to have your children as new students. An appointment is scheduled for you and your children to visit the school and complete the enrollment process.

As you drive onto the school grounds to enroll your children, you observe numerous, positively worded signs. Instead of "No Parking," the sign reads, "Please park in designated areas." Instead of "Visitors must report to the principal's office," the sign reads, "Welcome to our school. Please check in at the principal's office." There are parking spaces directly in front of the main entrance marked "Reserved for guests to our school." Other indications of the inviting school philosophy are everywhere. The grass is mowed, bushes trimmed, flowers planted, walkways clean, and the windows sparkle. Although the building was built more than a half-century ago, its physical condition conveys the sense of pride that everyone has in the school.

When you and your children enter the school and approach the principal's office, you smell fresh flowers and notice the green plants, fresh paint, and waxed floors. On entering the principal's office, you are promptly greeted by a professionally dressed school representative, who identifies herself, shakes hands with you *and* your children,

and says that the school staff is looking forward to meeting your family. The representative then asks you and your children to be seated in a comfortable reception area while packets of orientation materials are quickly assembled for you. There is no traditional counter in this school office – only a receptionist's desk and comfortable furniture arranged to make you feel welcome. The attractive office decor makes you feel like you are in the reception area of a first-class corporation, more like IBM or Westinghouse than a traditional public school. A volunteer student guide soon arrives to take you and your children on a tour of the school.

After introducing himself in a friendly and confident manner, the student guide leads you and your children around the school. The first place you visit is a well-furnished and attractively decorated classroom, even though it is summer when classrooms are usually stripped. The guide explains that at least one classroom remains decorated all summer, like a model apartment, to show visitors what the whole building will look like when school begins.

Your student guide then takes you to a beautifully maintained cafeteria featuring a French village theme, with individual tables, awnings, plants, and scenic murals on the walls. The guide mentions that classical music is always played during lunchtime. "If we can't hear the music, we're being too loud," he explains.

Next you visit the teachers' lounge and workroom, where there is a large collection of professional journals, an honor-system lending library, and colorful bulletin boards with both professional and personal notices. Like the rest of the school, the room is clean and the air is fresh. A vending machine offers fruit juices. Judging by the posters, you conclude that this school faculty has an active wellness program in place.

Toward the end of your tour, you stop off at a student restroom and notice how clean it is; soap and paper-towel dispensers are provided; no graffiti is seen in the bathroom stalls. This is not the way you remember the restrooms when you were a student. At the end of your

visit you and your children are escorted to your car and presented with a bumper sticker that reads: "OUR SCHOOLS: THE MOST INVITING PLACE IN TOWN." You are beginning to understand why.

When you arrive home and read the materials in the school information packet, attractively printed in the school colors, you learn that both the curricular and extracurricular activities call for a high level of student/teacher involvement. The simply worded statement on school policies reflects unconditional respect for everyone in the school. Rules are reasonable and enforceable. Most important, there is a genuine commitment to every student in the school.

The next day you receive a letter from the school thanking you for your visit and explaining that you will soon be contacted by members of volunteer groups that are part of the school family. These groups, from band boosters to room sponsors, from gardening clubs to older adult clubs, work in and around the school. They will be inviting your entire family to participate in the life of the school. As you settle in your new home, you have good feelings regarding your choice of this town and its outstanding school system.

Inviting schools like the one described here do exist in growing numbers throughout the United States, Canada, and other countries. The International Alliance for Invitational Education, a not-for-profit organization operating in the United States from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro and in Canada from Brock University in St. Catharines, Ontario, has identified dozens of inviting schools; and the list is growing.

Inviting schools do not happen by accident. They are the products of intentional effort, sound thinking, and regular assessment, all based on a firm commitment to basic values regarding what people are like and how they should be educated.

In this fastback we present a conceptual model for Invitational Education and suggest some practical strategies for making your school the most inviting place in town – intellectually, psychologically, and physically. Such an endeavor is not easy, but it is always worth the effort.

What Is Invitational Education?

I now believe that there is no biological, geographical, social, economic, or psychological determiner of man's condition that he cannot transcend if he is suitably invited or challenged to do so.

— Sidney Jourard
Disclosing Man to Himself (1968)

Invitational Education is a metaphor for an emerging model of the educative process consisting of four value-based assumptions about the nature of people and their potential. Invitational Education provides both a theoretical framework and practical strategies for what educators can do to create schools where people want to be and want to learn.

The Invitational Education model was first introduced by Purkey (1978) and enriched and refined by Purkey and Novak (1984), Amos (1985), Purkey and Schmidt (1987), and others. The model has relevance for a variety of concerns in education, the latest being its application to classroom management (Purkey and Strahan 1986).

As we present the theoretical framework of Invitational Education, we will use practical strategies labeled "Invitational Samplers" to illustrate the framework's concepts. These samplers are only a few of the countless ways to invite success in schools. An example of an "Invitational Sampler" follows:

Invitational Sampler

Share decisions whenever possible by involving others in the decision-making process. People who are excluded from decision making soon become passive, lethargic, and even hostile to those who deny them opportunities to make choices that influence their lives. Students can participate in making decisions in such areas as rules of conduct, academic expectations, and school activities. The goal is to make people in the school feel that it is *their* school.

Four Assumptions of Invitational Education

Invitational Education is as much an attitudinal disposition as it is a methodology. As such, it has wide application for people, policies, and programs. What distinguishes Invitational Education from other approaches to the educative process are four overarching assumptions, which, if violated for any reason, will compromise the spirit of Invitational Education. Following are the four assumptions:

1. *People are able, valuable, and responsible and should be treated accordingly.* How educators behave personally and professionally among themselves and with others is determined by whether they accept this assumption. If educators believe that some students are unable, worthless, and irresponsible, they will find ways to fulfill the prophecy. If educators believe that each student is able to learn, is worthy of respect, and can be responsible, they will find ways for students to succeed in school.

2. *Education should be a collaborative, cooperative activity.* Getting people to do what is desired without involving them in the process is like beating on cold iron. Even if the effort is successful, the energy expended is disproportionate to what is accomplished. There

are moral and ethical issues involved in doing things *with* people as opposed to doing things *to* people. People are entitled to a voice in their own destiny.

3. *People possess untapped potential in all areas of human endeavor.* The curricula we devise, the policies we establish, the programs we sponsor, and the physical environments we create are all anchored in assumptions regarding individuals and their potential. As one high school student wrote: "Mr. Penn invited us to like ourselves and to take pride in our work. He expected a great deal of us and we did not let him down. He thought we were brighter than we were, so we were!" Human potential, though not always apparent, is always there, waiting to be discovered and invited forth.

4. *Human potential can best be realized by places, policies, and processes that are specifically designed to invite development, and by people who are intentionally inviting with themselves and others, personally and professionally.* This fourth assumption is at the very heart of Invitational Education, for it explains the *how* of the invitational model. In practice, Invitational Education focuses on the people, places, policies, and programs that transmit messages promoting human relationships and individual potential. Inviting schools are memorable; disinviting schools are unforgettable.

Invitational Sampler

Show appreciation. At times during the school year, perhaps at holidays, it is important for educators to express their appreciation to supporters of the school. Secretaries, custodians, aides, school volunteers, and others are important parts of the school family. Letting all these individuals know how much the school appreciates their contributions is essential to creating and maintaining an inviting school.

The above four assumptions of Invitational Education, dealing with what people are like and what education can be, serve as a framework for four elements that are critical to the invitational model. These are trust, respect, intentionality, and optimism (we use the acronym TRIO when referring to these elements). Each of these elements will now be considered in turn.

Elements of Invitational Education

In baseball, when the batter goes to the plate, he "digs in" to find the stance that feels right and provides the best chance of making solid contact with the baseball. A good stance does not guarantee a home run, but it does increase the chances of hitting the ball. The same is true of the stance provided by Invitational Education. Educators who accept the assumptions of the model and who operate from a position of trust, respect, intentionality, and optimism have a far greater chance of creating an inviting school.

Trust. Trust is manifested through a inviting pattern of action, not by any single act. Even when dealing with the most hostile and aggressive students, successful teachers remain in control and avoid responding in kind. Trust is created by the educator's consistent behavior over time, which establishes a dependable and predictable school environment.

Invitational Sampler

Display emblems of trust. Sometimes educators are so concerned about the prevention of vandalism or thievery that schools become like prisons, with locks on everything and warning signs everywhere. The result is that vandals and thieves appear to be running the school, creating distrust in everyone. When chances of success are good, educators should treat students as trustworthy. Students will live up, or down, to expectations.

In an inviting school environment, "emblems of trust" are everywhere. Rules are kept simple, supervision is low-key, students are allowed to handle expensive equipment. When students are encouraged to make significant choices in their lives, they are far more likely, later in life, to maintain personal integrity in the face of external pressures and temptations.

Respect. The second element of TRIO conveys an attitude of respect for the unique value, ability, and self-directing powers of people. This respect is given whether or not the respect is "earned." In Invitational Education, respect is a given – an undeniable birthright of each person.

When lapses of responsibility occur, offending students are consulted; they are asked to analyze their behavior and to make suggestions for improvement. When penalties are necessary, those responsible for discipline recognize the difference between a state trooper and a storm trooper. Penalties involve the loss of privileges, such as free time, rather than the loss of self-esteem, such as occurs with corporal punishment.

Intentionality. Educators who subscribe to the invitational model do things on purpose, and for purposes they can explain and defend. They are intentional. Because they have a consistent position from

Invitational Sampler

Check your sign language. All signs in and around school buildings should begin with "Please" and end with "Thank You." This is particularly true for signs that forbid things. The Midwest Specialties Company (P.O. Box 2026, Kalamazoo, MI 49001) sells decals for glass and solid doors that read "Welcome to our school — visitors please report to the office upon entering the building. Thank you." Such wording conveys a much more respectful attitude than do "No Trespassing" and "Visitors must report to the principal's office."

Invitational Sampler

Hold your point. Champion bird dogs are judged in part by how long they "hold the point" when they detect a covey of birds. It's been reported that a champion bird dog becomes so intentionally committed to pointing birds that when it is "at point" the dog can be lifted completely off the ground and it will not break its point! Similarly, champion educators are judged by the consistent and dependable way in which they function.

which to make decisions, they know when they can be flexible if the situation calls for flexibility. They understand that to be intentionally inviting, when others are disinviting, is the true test of professionalism.

Optimism. The fourth and perhaps most important element of TRIO is optimism. Optimism is the ability to live with the harshest of realities but still maintain a positive view of the world. This optimism is not to be confused with a Pollyanna outlook; rather, it is the recognition that optimism is essential if development is to occur. In Goethe's words: "If we take people as they are, we make them worse. If we treat them as if they were what they ought to be, we help them to become what they are capable of becoming."

Those who accept the assumptions and elements of Invitational Education cannot be pessimistic. Invitational Education affirms each person's present worth, while inviting all to realize their potential. An inviting act may be overlooked, but it is always valuable; even the smallest has boundless potential.

Theoretical Foundations of Invitational Education

Invitational Education emanates from two theoretical perspectives: the perceptual tradition and self-concept theory. The following dis-

Invitational Sampler

Share success stories. The cup is not half-empty, it is half-full! Begin each faculty meeting on an optimistic note by reporting the successful experiences that have taken place since the last meeting. Even in the worst of situations there is room for optimism, so share accomplishments and success stories.

cussion deals with how these two perspectives contribute to the foundations of Invitational Education.

The perceptual tradition. Why do people behave as they do? Throughout history philosophers and other scholars have answered this question in many ways. For example, a Freudian might say that people behave as they do because of internal dynamics of the unconscious. A behaviorist would emphasize the influence of environmental stimuli that preceded or followed a particular behavior. In contrast with these approaches, the perceptual tradition maintains that people do what they do because of how they perceive the world at the moment of behaving. This perceptual tradition maintains that each person is a conscious agent who considers, constructs, interprets, and then acts. And ultimately each person is responsible for his or her actions.

The perceptual tradition operates on the premise that all behavior is a function of the individual's *perceived world*. A person's behavior may make little sense when observed from the "external" views of other people but makes great sense from the "internal" view of the experiencing person. For example, to an emotionally starved person, even the smallest inviting act may be seen as a feast.

Self-concept theory. Each person has a unique system of perceptions about self: Who am I? How do I fit into the world? How valuable, able, and responsible am I? Self-concept, then, is each individual's perception of his or her personal world and includes the following

characteristics: 1) strives for stability by seeking orderliness and harmony; 2) functions to maintain, protect, and enhance itself; 3) seeks consistency by assimilating or rejecting perceptions that do or do not fit preconceptions; 4) allows change when desire is high and risk is low; 5) learns and develops as a result of inviting or disinviting experiences; and 6) constructs and reconstructs experience throughout life, layer by layer, experience by experience. Essentially, a good self-concept is little more than the memory of inviting acts, which are accepted, extended, and successfully acted on.

Invitational Sampler

Read behavior backwards. Rather than looking only at the behavior of a misbehaving student, an angry parent, or a cranky colleague, consider how the person might be viewing self, others, and the world. Sometimes students see themselves as more disinvited than undisciplined. By looking at the "why" of behavior, it is much easier to understand the "what."

In this chapter we have presented some of the major concepts underlying Invitational Education. If educators want to create inviting schools, they must be able to describe, in ways that are conceptually sound, what the factors in the total school environment are that make it an inviting school and why they function as they do. Unfortunately, the educative process is frequently described by using "doing-to" terms. Educators talk in terms of "motivating," "building," "shaping," "enhancing," "reinforcing," or simply "making" students learn. As well-meaning as these efforts are, from the viewpoint of the perceptual tradition and self-concept theory, they are misguided. Students are not passive recipients or inert functionaries to be turned on, cranked out, or filled up.

Invitational Sampler

Mount mirrors. Obtain full-length mirrors and place several around the school where students, faculty, and staff can see themselves as they pass by. This invites neatness and a sense of good grooming. Place a sign at the top of the mirror that says: "PROUD MEMBERS OF THE BEST SCHOOL IN _____ (name the state)."

The next chapter moves from theory to practice with examples of how the Four P's (Places, People, Policies, and Programs) work together to create and maintain inviting schools, where there are only advantaged students.

Theory into Practice: The Four P's

An idea whose time has come: the gradually formed and tested hypothesis that the individual has within himself vast resources for self-understanding, for altering his self-concept, his attitudes, and his self-directed behavior – and that these resources can be tapped if only a definable climate of facilitative psychological attitudes can be provided.

– Carl Rogers
"In Retrospect – Forty-Six Years"
American Psychologist (1974)

Just as everyone and everything in hospitals should aid in the promotion of health, so everyone and everything in schools should invite the realization of human potential. This involves the *places* (classrooms, offices, hallways, commons, restrooms, playing fields, gymnasiums, lawns, libraries); the *people* (teachers, students, bus drivers, aides, volunteers, cafeteria staff, secretaries, nurses, librarians, coaches, counselors, custodians, crossing guards, administrators); the *policies* (rules, codes, regulations, procedures), and *programs* (curricular and extracurricular, including the spirit in which the programs are conducted). Educators who pay careful attention to the Four P's can better ensure that each school day is an invitation to learning.

Invitational Sampler

Remember the Jello Principle. This principle maintains that everything and everybody is interconnected. If you poke the jello, all of it jiggles. If one teacher is rude to a parent, as far as that parent is concerned, the whole faculty is rude. Everything and everybody in the school is making a statement for the entire school. Each person is an ambassador.

Places

Places offer an excellent beginning point for introducing Invitational Education to a school because they are so visible. If hallways are littered, paint is peeling, restrooms are smelly, classrooms dusty, offices cluttered, and cafeteria grimy, one can assume that the school's policies, programs, and people are the same. Places are the most obvious element in any school and are the easiest to change. They provide an opportunity for immediate improvement.

A secretary in a large middle school in North Carolina provides a good example of how changing the physical environment improves

Invitational Sampler

Paint the locker room. A highly successful coach in Pennsylvania argues that the best way to have a winning football season is to paint the locker room. Perhaps the same is true for having a winning season in classrooms. Few things can make such an immediate improvement as a fresh coat of paint. Teachers teach better and students learn better in an inviting physical environment.

the working atmosphere. After her principal decided to renovate the school office with improved lighting, new furniture and carpeting, and removal of the tall counter, she reported: "It was as if I had been let out of prison!" Improving the physical environment may not have tangible benefits immediately, but it is important to assess physical facilities continuously to see if improvements are needed to enhance the working and learning atmosphere.

Policies

Policies refer to the rules, codes, and procedures used to regulate the ongoing functions of organizations. In schools, policies exist for such functions as discipline, personnel selection, bus routes, snow days, attendance, and visitation procedures, to name a few. Ultimately the policies created, be they formal or informal, communicate a strong message to people in the school and the community about how things are to be done and where each person fits in. They also communicate views regarding whether or not people are seen as able, valuable, and responsible.

Sometimes, policies are created that, even though well-intentioned, place undue restrictions or burdens on individuals or groups. Some examples are: a cafeteria policy requiring that an identical amount of food be served to each student whether he or she weighs 70 pounds or 270 pounds, an elementary principal who demands complete silence from children during their lunchtime, or buses that leave the

Invitational Sampler

Ensure quick line time. A student or teacher who has to stand in line for more than four minutes is wasting valuable time. Time in school should not be spent standing in line. Review procedures so that faculty, staff, and students can avoid long lines in the cafeteria or elsewhere.

school at a certain time regardless of whether students are aboard or not. Such insensitive, uncaring, or inappropriate policies have no place in an inviting school.

Programs

Advocates of Invitational Education are aware of the importance of programs. Sometimes well-intentioned programs are harmful to individuals or groups because they focus on narrow goals and neglect the wider scope of human needs. For example, some school programs group youngsters and give them a label, and the label becomes a stigma, which negates the positive purposes for which these programs originally were created. Although some forms of grouping are necessary for instructional purposes, there is a clear danger in programs that label and group human beings. The invitational model requires educators to monitor programs that could detract from the goals for which they were designed.

Invitational Sampler

Tap parent power. Many school programs can use parents or other volunteers as resources. Volunteers can fill many roles, including tutoring, typing, filing, monitoring, grading, chaperoning, even teaching mini-courses. Most communities have volunteers available. They only need to be invited.

Advocates of Invitational Education are not only aware of the importance of programs within their own institutions but also are informed about programs in the larger community. There are dozens of community-based programs, from free dental work to free eyeglasses, from Big Brother to United Way, any of which can contribute to the welfare of students in schools.

Invitational Sampler

Rule of the Four C's. When faced with a difficult situation, remember the Rule of the Four C's: Concern, Confer, Consult, Confront. Always start with the first C, Concern. Is this situation a matter of real concern? Often it is not, and it can be safely overlooked. But if it is a matter of concern, move to the second C, Confer. A low-key conference often resolves a situation. If conferring does not work, move to the third C, Consult. A more formal consultation is in order. If the situation persists, then the final C, Confront, is appropriate. This final C requires a direct, no-nonsense, this-is-how-it-is approach. But remember to begin with the less demanding C's first. Resolve situations at the lowest possible level of conflict. This saves a lot of energy.

People

People-oriented schools are easy to identify. They are the ones whose doors are unlocked early on frigid days so that students do not have to stay out in the cold. They are the ones where the faculty call students by name, where courtesy and civility are the rule, where there is a general atmosphere of warmth and respect.

Places, policies, and programs are all important aspects of Invitational Education, but people come first. If places, policies, or programs directly or indirectly inconvenience people or inhibit their development, they should be altered wherever possible. People develop best in an inviting environment.

Increasing Your Invitational Quotient

Since we are what we do, if we want to change what we are we must begin by changing what we do, must undertake a new mode of action.

– A. Wheelis
How People Change (1973)

By this time you, the reader, might be thinking, "All this sounds good in theory, but does it work in the real world?" The authors agree that Invitational Education is easier to talk about than to do. Of course, the real test is whether it can be implemented with a long-term plan for action. We believe Invitational Education offers such a plan. It enables educators to become committed to an enduring project, not unlike the commitment of the marathon runner.

Suppose you decided to run a marathon – 26 miles, 385 yards. Chances are, if you knew nothing about running a marathon, you would show up on the day of the race dressed in street clothes and out of condition. When the starting gun sounded, you would start running full-speed. And if you made the first mile, it would be a miracle.

Marathon runners orchestrate a plan for running a good race. They train properly, they modify their diet, they develop a support group of other runners – all as part of their race plan. They learn how to sustain their energy, and they develop an I-can-do-it mind-set, both of which are necessary to complete this grueling physical task. The

same is true of educators who subscribe to the concepts of Invitational Education. They have a systematic plan for orchestrating their efforts in making schools inviting.

We call the plan for Invitational Education the "Four Corner Press." The four corners are: 1) being personally inviting with one's self, 2) being personally inviting with others, 3) being professionally inviting with one's self, and 4) being professionally inviting with others. While these corners are simple to describe, they are not easy to implement. The goal is to balance the demands of the four corners and to orchestrate ways to blend them together.

Being Personally Inviting with One's Self

For the Invitational Education model to succeed, it cannot be restricted to working only with others in offices and classrooms. The invitational model is not a hat you put on at the beginning of the school day and take off when leaving for home in the evening. It begins with being personally inviting with one's self. The personal messages one sends to one's self are critically important.

To be personally inviting to one's self, there are two types of invitations one can extend to one's self: to live life fully and to use quality "self-talk." Educators have a special responsibility to have lively

Invitational Sampler

Treat yourself. Make a pledge to do something special for yourself in the immediate future. Treat yourself to a shopping trip, a new outfit, some quality down-time, a good book, a favorite meal, a play, movie, or other enjoyable event. Think of the nicest invitation you could send to another person, then send it to yourself. After all, you are always invited when you are giving the party.

and interesting lives. If educators are bored, they are probably boring other people. Invitational Education encourages educators to stand tall, walk proud, dress well, eat right, and do interesting things – all in order to have a positive presence in their own lives as well as the lives of others.

In addition, educators need to engage in internal dialogue or quality "self-talk" as they go about their life activities. On occasions when a mistake is made, persons often will send themselves a powerfully disinviting message, one that they would never imagine sending to anyone else. Consider these examples of negative self-talk messages: "I have two left feet," "I could never lose weight," "I'm all thumbs," "I can never remember names," or "I couldn't carry a tune in a bucket." Negative self-talk demeans the individual. Since we are our only lifelong companions, we should try to make "self-talk" quality messages – ones that will nourish our self-esteem.

Invitational Sampler

Rehearse the future. Often when we make mistakes, we go over them again and again in our minds, in effect, reinforcing the mistakes. A better approach is to ask: "How will I handle this situation the next time it appears?" By concentrating on future responses and behaviors, the future can be rehearsed. Besides, what is done is done.

Being Personally Inviting with Others

To develop fully, people require nurturing from others and should give nurturing in return. We need to love and be loved throughout life. The recognition we receive from others for deeds small or large sustains us and encourages us to do more.

Invitational Sampler

Learn handles. A person's name is a most important possession. Using a person's name signals that you have taken the time to learn the name correctly. When you are first introduced to people, listen carefully and repeat their names to yourself three times. Then use the names as you speak to them. The recognition of their names will not go unnoticed.

Students are keenly aware of the nuances in messages they receive in schools. In Invitational Education, teachers give consideration to students' feelings and interests. Sharing out-of-class experiences, making a special effort to learn students' interests, and expressing pleasure when the class has performed well are ways teachers can influence how students perceive themselves as learners.

Invitational Sampler

Act caringly. When a student or colleague misses more than one day of school, call and express your concern. If the person misses more than three days, prepare some sort of "Welcome Back" message in the form of a note, a flower, or a special little gift. Acts of caring are contagious.

Educators also need various kinds of personal invitations. Cultivating friendship is one form of invitation. Like cultivating a garden, friendships take time and effort. However, they can be one of the most significant ways of celebrating life, be it sharing a meal or a drink, or remembering a birthday or anniversary. Inviting relationships affirm both parties.

Being Professionally Inviting with One's Self

Living in a rapidly changing society and profession can be both exhilarating and exasperating. If we stand still in our professional development, we lose ground. Thus, every educator has to become a lifelong learner and an explorer of new professional frontiers.

Invitational Sampler

Remember the Rule of Four. You are violating the Rule of Four when you spend too much time doing paperwork or other chores that someone else could do with only four hours of training. Using volunteers and paraprofessionals is an effective way to cut down on a heavy workload.

Lifelong learning is often stressed in education circles. It tells educators to keep their blades bright and not to rust on their laurels. In practice, lifelong learning involves reading professional texts and journals, writing for professional publication, joining professional groups, and participating in professional conferences. Piloting a new curriculum, participating in a teacher exchange, or traveling in a foreign coun-

Invitational Sampler

Carpool an adventure. If an important conference, a noted lecturer, or a training workshop is scheduled in a nearby city, join with your colleagues, pool your gas money, and attend as a group. Enjoy the companionship going and coming; and while there, pick up brochures, handouts, and good ideas to share when you return home.

try are just a few of the ways to be professionally inviting with one's self. When opportunities for success are good, give them a try.

Being Professionally Inviting with Others

Being professionally inviting with others is best accomplished by building on the opportunities provided by the previous three corners. Once the first three corners are functioning smoothly, they serve as a foundation for the fourth corner.

Invitational Sampler

Make the phone your ally. The telephone is your conduit to your community. Parents and others can learn a lot about your school by a simple phone call. And do not restrict your calls only to discuss problems; share the good things that are happening, too. When answering a phone, make the caller feel welcome. Saying, "Good morning, Jackson High School, Bob Brown speaking" is far more inviting than simply answering, "Jackson High School."

Two ways to be professionally inviting with others are to communicate clearly and to evaluate fairly. Communicating clearly involves emphasizing positive behavior. For example, "We have five minutes left, and it is important that we finish on time" is much clearer and positive than "If you don't finish on time, you will have to stay after school and finish." When you communicate clearly, people do not have to try to read your mind.

Evaluating fairly means treating people equitably. To be professionally inviting with others, educators must guard against differential treatment. In classrooms this means finding ways to invite students each day. When carrying out a school policy, it means that people

Invitational Sampler

Invite explicitly. The more explicit an invitation, the more likely it will be accepted. Vagueness leaves others wondering: "What did he mean by that?" For example, saying: "Let's go to dinner Thursday evening at 7:00" has a much better chance of being accepted than "Let's get together sometime." No one can read your mind. Let people know what you want.

perceive the policy as being inherently fair and appropriately administered.

The four corners of Invitational Education described here are essential to successful personal and professional functioning. Educators who are able to orchestrate these four corners into a seamless whole are on the way to invitational living.

Invitational Sampler

Handle the unacceptable. When a student has submitted something unacceptable, try saying: "I think you can do better than this." Point out ways the work can be improved, then say: "I want you to do this." By asking for the order, the educator encourages both student responsibility and academic success.

Conclusion

In this fastback the authors have explored the process of inviting school success. By focusing on the pervasive and often subtle messages extended and received in the school environment, the authors have tried to point out familiar and often simple things that invite school success but are often overlooked. In *The Wizard of Oz* the witch tells Dorothy, "You cannot miss the road to the City of Emerald, for it is paved with yellow brick." But Emerald Cities, like inviting schools, can sometimes be too obvious to see. When Dorothy was lamenting that she would never get back to Kansas, the good witch Glenda reminded her: "Silly girl, you've always had the power, you just didn't *want* hard enough." So it is with schools. If enough educators want hard enough to create and maintain inviting schools, then they will come about. As Dorothy said when she finally got back to Kansas, "Oh, Aunt Em, I've been to many strange and marvelous places looking for something that was right here all along – right in my own backyard!" So it is with inviting school success.

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